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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SINGAPORE 002156

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SUBJECT: SINGAPORE MFA BRIEFING ON ASEAN-RELATED MEETINGS

REF: A) SINGAPORE 2085 B) SINGAPORE 2086 C) SINGAPORE  
2092

11. (SBU) Summary: MFA ASEAN Directorate Director Jacky Foo said the Government of Singapore sees two major accomplishments coming out of the ASEAN Summit. First, there was robust discussion of the Burma issue and consensus that the issue must not be allowed to block ASEAN integration. Second, the signing of the ASEAN Charter was an important step toward ASEAN's becoming a rules-based organization. ASEAN leaders also agreed to accelerate implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint to 2015. At the various ASEAN-dialogue partner summits, varying levels of progress were made on free trade and other cooperation agreements, he said. End Summary.

ASEAN Summit  
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12. (SBU) Singapore MFA ASEAN Directorate Director Jacky Foo briefed dialogue partners November 28 on the 13th ASEAN Summit and related meetings held in Singapore November 18-22.

Foo said the Government of Singapore sees two major accomplishments coming out of the ASEAN Summit. First, there was robust discussion of the Burma issue and consensus that the issue must not be allowed to block ASEAN integration. Second, the signing of the ASEAN Charter was an important step toward ASEAN's becoming a rules-based organization, he stated.

13. (SBU) Foo said a committee was formed to discuss implementation of the Charter after ratification. It was hoped that all member nations would ratify the Charter by the time of the 14th ASEAN Summit to be held in Thailand in 2008. Thailand offered to commemorate the important occasion by hosting the meeting in the palace where ASEAN was first founded 40 years ago. Foo noted that Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had specified that ratification by her country would be dependent upon real democratic change coming about in Burma.

14. (SBU) Foo noted the reorganization of the ASEAN Secretariat. The Secretary General will now be supported by

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four Deputy Secretary Generals responsible for: 1) political/security issues, 2) economics, 3) social/cultural issues and 4) external relations. Funding for the new positions has not yet been identified, but Foo said he is confident appropriate funding will be found. ASEAN remains

committed to the principle of "equal contributions," but members and dialogue partners can also contribute through the ASEAN Development Fund and/or the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. Next steps on Charter implementation will include defining the Human Rights body and its mandate and establishing a comprehensive dispute settlement mechanism. The economic sector already enjoys a robust mechanism that can act as a model with regard to resolving non-economic disputes, he stated.

15. (SBU) Foo said ASEAN leaders agreed to accelerate implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint to realize full implementation by 2015. The AEC Blueprint would transform ASEAN into "a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development, and a region fully integrated into the global economy." The AEC Blueprint would then serve as a prototype for two other Blueprints, Political/Security and Social/Cultural. The AEC was done first because its goals are more easily defined, he stated. Foo noted that ASEAN leaders signed a declaration to support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, to support Indonesia in establishing a post-Kyoto framework, and to promote environmental sustainability and a green lifestyle within ASEAN.

#### ASEAN Plus Three

16. (SBU) Foo said the ASEAN plus China, Japan and Republic of Korea (ASEAN Plus Three or APT) meeting marked its 10th Anniversary. The parties discussed measures to deepen cooperation in financial services, education, trade and support of the Six-Party Talks, he stated.

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#### East Asian Summit

17. (SBU) Foo indicated that although Burma blocked UN Special Advisor Gambari from briefing the East Asian Summit as Singapore had proposed, Gambari did manage to meet individually with most EAS leaders. On Korea issues, the EAS agreed to support the Six-Party Talks and encourage reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. Japan announced an East Asia Economic Research Institute (EARI) office would be set up on a temporary basis at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. A committee was formed to review how to follow up on leaders' discussion. The importance of contributing to interfaith dialogue was also discussed, he said.

#### ASEAN Plus China

18. (SBU) Foo stated that China pledged further cooperation with ASEAN on the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) and on military issues. The ASEAN-China FTA is still being negotiated, but there is agreement on most chapters. Both sides have pledged to redouble efforts on the investment chapter. Connectivity between China and ASEAN must also be strengthened. A strategic initiative for multilateral liberalization that would promote increased travel between ASEAN countries and China is in the works, he noted.

#### ASEAN Plus Japan

19. (SBU) According to Foo, there has been an intensification of effort on the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, with substantive completion. The document, which will be signed in March 2008, provides for financial assistance and training for maritime security, Japan's assistance to upgrade ASEAN's capacity to deal with Avian Flu and environmental catastrophes in the region, and

for middle school and high school-level student exchanges, he said.

#### ASEAN Plus ROK

¶10. (SBU) Foo said Korean soft culture now permeates ASEAN countries, but the cultural presence of ASEAN countries in the ROK remains limited. It was determined that ASEAN would establish an office in downtown Seoul and an ASEAN Studies Center at the university level. A research group was formed to determine what more could be done to increase ASEAN-Korea cooperation, he stated.

#### ASEAN Plus India

¶11. (SBU) Foo said FTA negotiations were ongoing at the time of the Summit and should be completed by March 2008. While five key products (pepper, coffee, tea, palm oil and crude oil) were still under discussion, India was committed to: enhanced integration with ASEAN; more open transport (open skies); science and technological cooperation with Southeast Asia; and environment cooperation using a USD five million green fund, he indicated.

#### ASEAN-EU Summit

¶12. (SBU) Foo stated that was some convergence of views between ASEAN and the EU on the issue of Burma, with both sides raising doubts about the effectiveness of sanctions. A work plan focusing on energy and environmental technology was issued with an agreement that EU would assist ASEAN on Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issues, he said.

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